

Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

IMB commissions 67 new missionaries

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — A total of 67 new International Mission Board (IMB) missionaries were commissioned May 21 at the board's Missionary Learning Center (MLC) in Richmond. The new missionaries also joined in the celebration as portions of the MLC were named for a pair of recently retired missionaries with a combined total of 80 years of service.

The appointment of 67 new missionaries brought the number of long-term Southern Baptist workers worldwide to 5,284. Headed for service in 13 of the board's 15 regions, the new missionaries came from a wide variety of backgrounds — natives of Romania, India, and Argentina alongside Baptists from Texas, North Carolina, and New Jersey; two classically trained musicians; a home builder; an elementary school teacher; and a J.C. Penney store manager, alongside seminary students and church staff members.

Among those attending the service were 124 new missionaries currently at MLC to prepare for the start of their own overseas assignments.

The appointment service was held in conjunction with a May 21-22 meeting of the IMB's trustee board. The MLC auditorium in which the service was held is part of an expansion program made necessary by the dramatic increase in the number of Southern Baptists coming forward for overseas missionary service.

The expansion more than doubled the capacity of the center, which has trained more than 5,000 long-term missionaries and 3,000 of their children since it opened in 1984.

The appointment service included the dedication of those new facilities. The auditorium complex was named in honor of Don Kammerdiener, former IMB executive vice president, and a classroom/conference room

When, as a field missionary, he was challenged by Psalm 37:4 to identify the desires of his heart, Rankin said his first thoughts included having more balance in his life, finding respite from his heavy workload, and achieving better physical conditioning.

"As I meditated on it, however, I began to feel that those desires were pretty self-centered and that the desires of my heart should be focused on something more significant, such as the peoples of South Asia and Southeast Asia coming to know the Lord," he said.

The new missionaries echoed Rankin's advice about success in God's kingdom as they told the audience about how God had called them to international missions.

Clem Edwards, who will serve in Eastern South America with his wife Linda and their four children, said that in college he was entirely focused on his career plans, but "God used the testimony of a retired missionary to break the heart of this self-centered college student," Edwards said. "My career ambitions crumbled as God built in me a passion for the unreached nations."

Another new worker, headed with his wife to Northern Africa and the Middle



PRAISING THE LIGHT — A men's trio consisting of (from left) D. Ray Davis, Chuck Traylor, and Randy Pegues, all of Richmond, Va., sang "I Have Seen the Light" before a standing-room-only crowd that witnessed the appointment of 67 new Southern Baptist overseas missionaries May 21. (Photo by Bill Bangham)

East, said God had been working for years to fill his heart with his (God's) love for Muslims. The couple was not further identified for security reasons.

"Every year, God has given me Muslim friends," the new worker said. "With each person, I have fallen more in love with the people. After receiving a call to Northern Africa, everything inside me came to rest. I knew I was going home."

Laurie Russell, who will serve with her husband Mark and their son Noah in Western Europe, said she had come to understand that the passion for missions flows out of an intimate relationship with God.

"If you know God, you want to make him known," she said. "Our desire is to make him known in hearts that do not know him."

Another young worker, headed for service in Central Asia, said God planted the desire for missions in her heart at a young age. She was not further identified for security reasons.

"I am here today because of God's gentle whisper. All my life, I have dreamed of this day," she said. "Ever since he called me at the age of 13, he has been faithful to lead me to this place and grant this true desire of my heart."

"I'm here today, not because of who I am, but because of who He is."

"Jesus said, 'Apart from me you can do nothing,'" Rankin admonished the new workers.

"Trust him not only to lead day by day, but also trust him for the power you need. Trust the promises of his word and realize, 'It is not I, but Christ who lives in me.'"



LIFETIME OF SERVICE — Rachel and Sam James (foreground) and Meredith and Don Kammerdiener were honored for 40 years of missionary service and leadership during a May 21 service at the International Mission Board's Missionary Learning Center near Richmond, Va. (Photo by Roy M. Burroughs)

development, both of whom recently retired after 40 years of missionary service.

Success in God's kingdom comes not by just making plans, setting goals, and working hard to achieve them, but by delighting in God, trusting him with your life and waiting for him to accomplish what he wants, the 67 new Southern Baptist missionaries were told by Mississippi native Jerry Rankin, IMB president.



LEADING THE WAY — New missionaries in training at the International Mission Board's Missionary Learning Center near Richmond carried the flags of the nations for the May 21 appointment of 67 new overseas workers. (Photo by Roy M. Burroughs)

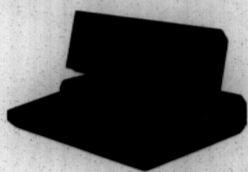
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Toward St. Louis

Southern Baptists from across the world will gather in St. Louis on June 11-12 for the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC). For those who have never attended, the meeting offers tremendous opportunities to praise God for his manifold blessings to us while at the same time conducting the business of the largest Protestant band of believers anywhere on earth.

Those who have attended know of the hustle and bustle of the meeting, the old friendships renewed and new relationships kindled, the ministry victories shared, the setbacks prayed over, and the keen sense of having attended a really big, old-time tent revival.

Lee Porter, the SBC's registration secretary for the past 24 years, told Associated Baptist Press (ABP) that he expects about 10,000 messengers (local church members sent as voting representatives). "Give me 200 or 300 either way, and I think we'll be right on top of it. I don't think we'll go much over 10,000," he said.

That's a shame. Many of us are old enough to recall the Sunday evening worship services of our youth when the pastor, fresh from the SBC annual meeting he dared not miss, would deliver a glowing report that highlighted a convention growing in nearly every category.

However, since the days when a group calling themselves conservatives won control of the convention from a group calling themselves moderates in a years-long war of attrition, attendance at the annual meeting has dropped off considerably.

At the height of the struggle for control of the convention, 45,519 messengers set the all-time record high attendance at the 1985 meeting in Dallas. The last time the convention met in St. Louis (1987), 25,607 messengers were registered.

Last summer in New Orleans, the messenger count was down to 9,584. Equally troubling is the fact that the number of

churches represented at the annual meeting has declined from a high of 5,287 for the 1985 meeting in Dallas to 3,289 for last year's New Orleans meeting.

The scorched-earth battle for control of the convention is responsible for some of the loss of interest in the annual meeting. Political alliances sprung up, careers were ruined, long-term friendships were shattered, and more than a few people began to feel excluded. None of those factors worked to boost attendance.

"I think ultimately this has to hurt," Porter told ABP. "I worry about the number who attend, because I don't think they really feel like they're a part of what's happening."

Simple demographic trends are another reason for the downturn: people "cocooning" in their comfortable homes with 500 digital cable channels and broadband Internet access are reluctant to make the effort to attend the annual meetings of any of the groups with which they are associated.

The SBC is not alone in encountering that problem. Attendance at the annual meetings of the Mississippi Baptist Convention and many other state conventions has lagged in recent years. Local Baptist associations have also lamented the paucity on their level, too.

However, the SBC annual meeting is of special concern because it is one of our crown jewels as a convention — not spiritually, of course, because the Lord can accomplish his work with or without the SBC, but because so much of the lost world literally pauses each year to hear what Southern Baptists have to say at their annual meeting.

"IS PASTOR JEFF ALL RIGHT? HE HASN'T MADE ANY MOTIONS AT OUR DENOMINATIONAL MEETINGS IN SOME TIME."



If you don't believe that, you haven't seen the scores of satellite television trucks ringing the SBC meeting hall each year. You also must not listen to talk radio or read some of the country's major newspapers, because virtually all of those media outlets, whether liberal or conservative or somewhere in between, have something to say about the meeting each year.

Our system of governance comes closer to participatory democracy than any other religious convention or denomination in the world, but a democracy doesn't work well when its member citizens don't care enough to participate.

In the future, where will you stand?

GUEST OPINION:



Nothing new about 'mean girls'

By Rebecca Ingram Powell
Nashville

Mean girls. What's so new about that? Mean girls have been around forever. Suddenly, there is a media blitz covering something as ancient as human nature — something all women have had to endure.

Most of the media frenzy is due to the publication of Queen Bees & Wannabes written by Rosalind Wiseman, a 33-year-old author and president of the nonprofit Empower program.

Wiseman has effectively labeled the hierarchy that exists among girls from around age 10 through high school. Like any good diagnostician, Wiseman has accurately recognized and named a problem that generations of girls have endured. Her expert diagnosis merely confirms its existence.

Wiseman's book happens to come along at a time when my daughter is experiencing certain trials of her own with mean girls. I'm reliving some painful personal memories as I watch her wade into the turbulent waters of adolescence, where the mean girls are circling like sharks.

I am all too familiar with their mode of operation. They smell the blood of insecurity and awkwardness, seeking prey that is obviously weakened from cop-

ing with a changing body and an unwelcome discomfiture. Their menu varies like a seaside restaurant offering the "catch of the day." They head toward their current target with alarming speed, intent upon sinking their teeth into the tender flesh of budding self-awareness.

Remembering this, I try to head the sharks off before they get too close to my daughter. Unfortunately, the advice I have to offer is tainted with bitterness for the mean girls that visited the beach of my youth. My husband cautions me, "You are getting too involved in this."

The experts can offer plenty of sound, reasonable advice on how to deal with the mean girls. However, I found one expert whose advice is utterly radical, and strangely enough,

seems to have the best chance of actually creating change. His counsel has not been in demand by the media, but it has been sought many times by mothers on their knees.

This expert is Jesus Christ. What does he have to say about mean girls?

✓ Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you (Matt. 5:44).

✓ Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen (Eph. 4:29).

✓ Don't show favoritism (James 2:1).

As I have been thinking about all this lately, God brought a specific memory to my mind of one mean girl in particular. There

was a girl in my fifth grade class, Michelle, who was a little awkward and tended to be shy. She tried hard, but for all her perseverance, she always got left out.

One day, she called another girl in our class and asked for her help. She explained that she wanted and needed a friend but the mean girl she called refused to be her friend. "I just don't like you," she said. "I don't want to be your friend." Then as Michelle began to cry, this awful, mean girl hung up on her.

Guess who the mean girl was? Right. I am so sorry, Michelle. I really am.

It might not hurt us as grown women to do a self-check every once in a while, and see if any of that "mean-girlness" is surfacing in our lives today. Am I loving and praying for my enemies? Am I careful to watch my speech? Am I showing favoritism when I should instead be showing the open arms of Jesus Christ?

I'd say most of us have been on both sides of what is now called "relational aggression."

Rebecca Ingram Powell is an author and speaker. She lives with her husband Rich and their three children in Nashville.

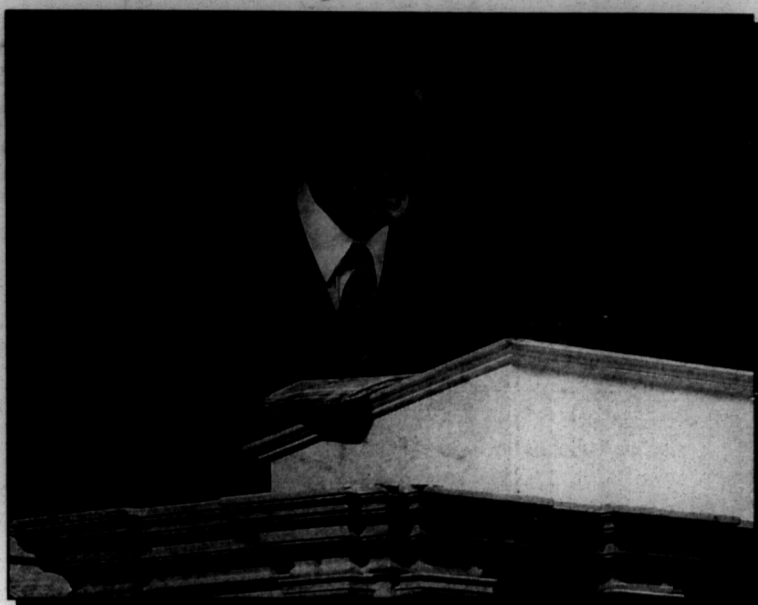
George: Trinity, crucifixion key differences

GRACEVILLE, Fla. (BP) — Since Sept. 11, the questions have become widely discussed: Do Christians and Muslims worship the same God? What does Islam and Christianity share in common? More importantly, are there essential differences between the two great religions that cannot be dismissed?

These were the questions addressed recently by Timothy George, dean of the Beeson Divinity School at Samford University in Birmingham, Ala., during The Baptist College of Florida (BCF) annual Powell Lectures. The historical theologian spoke twice at BCF's main campus in Graceville.

While there are significant commonalities between the two great religions, George insisted that Islam's rejection of the Trinity and crucifixion of Jesus pose unavoidable stumbling blocks for Muslims, demonstrating that the two religions cannot be said to worship the same God.

Despite the tendency in American culture — especially after the terrorist attacks of last fall — to reject exclusive truth claims and press for universal acceptance of all religions, George urged Christians to resist this pressure for two reasons. First, he said that to do so is dishonest, as any true Muslim would agree, and second, because doing so shows disrespect to deeply held convictions of both Muslims and Christians.



George

George urged Christians to better understand the theology of Islam as a means of reaching Muslims with the true gospel.

Today, there are more than one billion Muslims and, by the year 2025, George said Muslims will claim one of every three people in the world. Although many Americans associate Islam only with Arabic nations, only 15% of Muslims live in Arab lands.

Citing similarities between Islam and Christianity, he noted:

- Historical religions: "They take seriously history, unlike many religions of the East."

- Textual religions: Both Muslims and Christians based their theology on a sacred text — the Koran for Muslims and the Bible for Christians. While Christians go to great effort to translate the Bible into many languages, Muslims insist only the Arabic version of the Koran is authoritative, while all translations are only interpretations.

- Teleological religions: Islam and Christians teach there is a purpose to life,

including a final judgment with heaven and hell.

- Missionary religions: "They are concerned to spread the message they have into all the world," George said.

The Christian doctrine of the Trinity and the death of Jesus Christ on the cross represent key differences with Islam that cannot be ignored, George noted.

The "essential difference" is the claim of Muslims in the Koran (Surah 5:73) that "Christians believe in three

gods," George said, noting that the Muslim Student Association has published a tract for use on university campuses that prominently makes this claim.

Although this is a distorted, inaccurate portrayal of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, George said that many Christians are unable to refute the claim because the Trinity is a "neglected teaching" in Christian churches resulting in "widespread error, and even heresy, within the Christian community."

One example of Christian distortion of the Trinity, George said, is the modalism heresy — the "idea that back in the Old Testament you had God the Father. And in the New Testament it's Jesus, the Son. And now in the church we have the Holy Spirit, as though God was putting on different masks at different moments in the history of salvation."

"We need to recover a Bible understanding of the Trinity if we are going to be able to have dialogue and witness with Muslims who will point to this immediately as the weakest part of the Christian message," George declared.

The biblical teaching on the Trinity, George said, starts with Deuteronomy 6:4: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One" which Jesus referenced in Mark 12:29.

"This is foundational to the Christian faith. ... In Jesus Christ we encounter nothing less than the one true and living God," George said, noting the prologue to the Gospel of John: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God."

The "intimacy" of the Godhead, George said, is seen in John 1:18 and the eternal relationship between God the Father and God the Son is found in John 17. "At the heart of God there is this loving relationship of Father and Son united in the bond of the Holy Spirit. Jesus is Lord. When we say that, this is what we are saying."

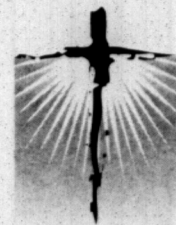
The truth that God became flesh (John 1:14) — the "part of our human reality that is most susceptible to suffering, to get-

ting hurt, to bleeding and dying" — is "shocking" to Muslims, George said. Islam, he said, cannot contemplate a loving God who is Father, "because they think that brings God too close — makes him too much like a human being."

The sin of "shirk," associating with God something that is not God, is unpardonable for Muslims — but this rejection of God as Father, the deity of Jesus and the personhood of the Holy Spirit means that it is wrong to say the god of Muhammad is the Father of Jesus, he said.

The statement "God has no son," etched on the Jerusalem mosque known as the Dome of the Rock standing opposite the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, illustrates the Muslim rejection of Jesus' deity and his crucifixion.

"You either go with the Dome of the Rock or you go with Calvary's cross," George noted. "It always comes down to Jesus, doesn't it?"



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Monument ruling appealed

VIRGINIA BEACH, Va. (BP) — The American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ), an international public interest law firm, asked a federal appeals court to overturn a lower court ruling that a display of a monument containing the text of the Ten Commandments in Plattsmouth, Neb. is unconstitutional. "We are appealing this important case because nothing in the constitution prohibits government from acknowledging the important role the Ten Commandments has played in the development of our culture," said Francis J. Manion, senior counsel of the ACLJ. "The people of Plattsmouth understand something the courts apparently do not, that is, the difference between an acknowledgement of religion and the establishment of religion. Accepting a fraternal group's gift which happens to contain a text from a religious source is no more an establishment of religion than is our national motto, 'In God We Trust' or the phrase 'One nation under God' found in the Pledge of Allegiance." The U.S. District Court for the District of Nebraska entered judgment on May 3 in favor of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Nebraska and an anonymous Plattsmouth resident who claims to be an atheist. The court ruled that the display violated the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. The court permanently barred Plattsmouth from "retaining the Ten Commandments display in Memorial Park as it is now situated" and awarded attorney's fees to the ACLU. The American Center for Law and Justice is an international public interest law firm specializing in constitutional law. The ACLJ is headquartered in Virginia and its web site address is www.aclj.org.

Looking back

10 years ago

Nelson Price, first vice-president of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) and a proposed candidate for the SBC presidency, won't be allowed the customary role of introducing the current president Morris Chapman during the upcoming SBC meeting, because of his potential nomination.

20 years ago

"The wording of the Scripture portion of the Baptist Faith and Message has served Baptists well since the New Hampshire confession of faith and to change it would only do harm to the fellowship," says Herschel Hobbs, chairman of the committee responsible for the 1963 version.

50 years ago

Chester L. Quarles, executive secretary of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, receives the honorary doctor of divinity degree from Mississippi College in Clinton. Quarles came to the board from First Church, Sylacauga, Ala., in 1950.

Georgia court unanimous on gambling ban

ATLANTA (BP) — The Georgia Supreme Court has upheld a legislative prohibition on video gambling. The state high court's unanimous decision forbids casino-style video gambling, such as poker and keno.

Apart from further legal action, the video machines, which are estimated to number 15,000 to 20,000 in the state, must be out of Georgia by June 30. The justices also ruled the state did not have to compensate the owners of the machines, which cost about \$3,000 each, the *Journal-Constitution* reported.

The Georgia legislature had approved the ban last summer at the behest of Gov. Roy Barnes, a Democrat. In pushing for the measure, Barnes called video gambling a "cancer," the newspaper reported.

Georgia became the second Southern state to push out video gambling. South Carolina outlawed the highly addictive games in 2000, ending the use of 22,000 video machines in the state, *Associated Press* reported.

LifeWay's Anniversary Day probes leaders

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — The eight presidents of the Baptist Sunday School Board/LifeWay Christian Resources during its 111-year history have been "remarkably similar, but also strikingly different."

Gene Mims, LifeWay vice president and president of its church resources division, noted what can be learned from each of the leaders during a special one-hour Anniversary Day chapel on May 17.

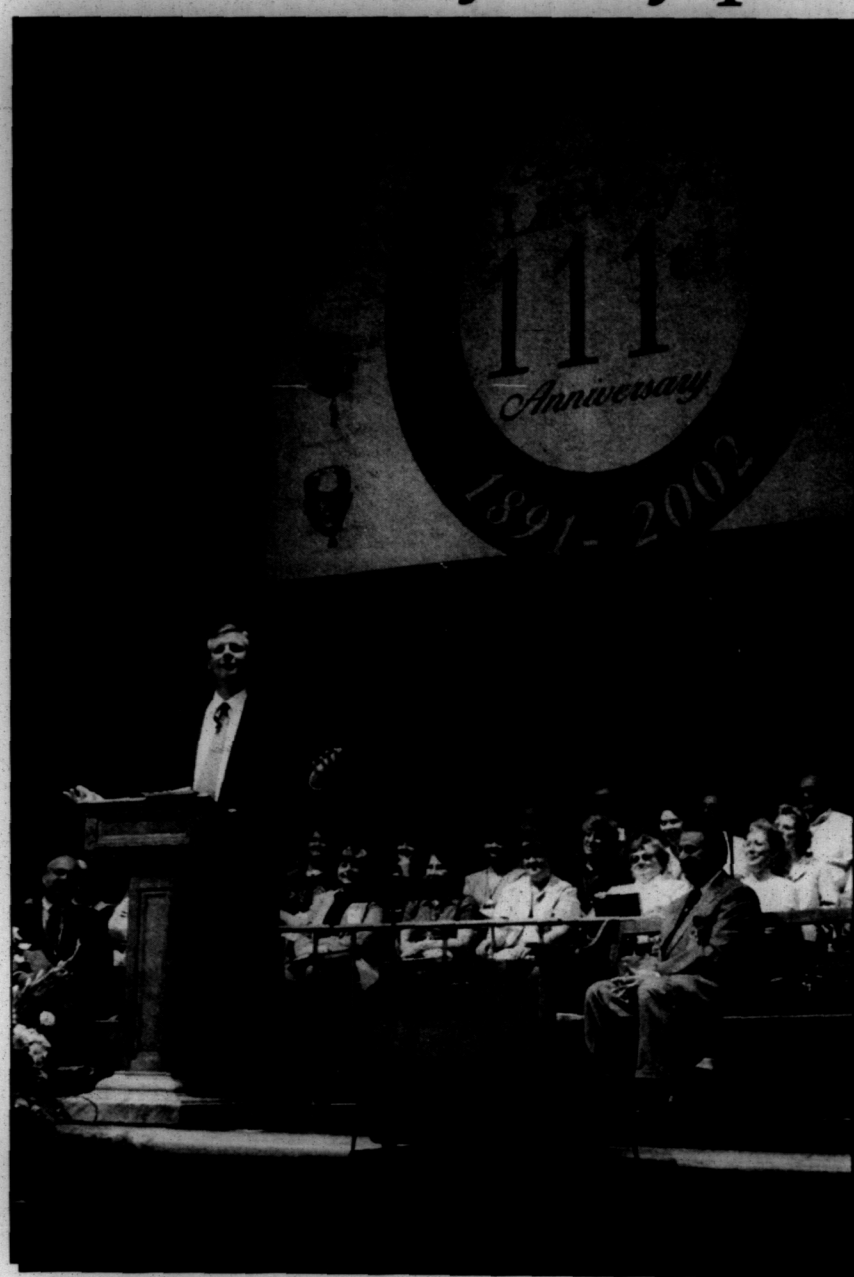
In addition to each president serving at the crossroads of business and ministry, Mims also noted of each:

◆ **J.M. Frost** (president from 1891-1893, 1896-1916): "He dreamed the dream. It broke his heart to leave the pastorate. Frost had the vision, a compelling image of an achievable future. He had the dream, but not the clarity. He couldn't imagine what the future would hold. He would never have imagined what we would become."

◆ **T.P. Bell** (president from 1893-1896): "He was a fierce defender [of the Sunday School Board]. He was a fierce competitor. He saw anyone who was opposed to this institution as someone who had to be eradicated. He went on the offensive and stood tall as he expressed that the Sunday School Board was a necessity for Baptist life."

"He was a champion for what he believed in. We learned from him that opposition to God's appointed, intended work is to be expected, but [the work] is never to be compromised."

◆ **I.J. Van Ness** (president from 1916-1935): "He was a true educator. He brought the value of Christian education into the Southern Baptist Convention long before the seminaries thought about it. He saw that it wasn't only products that we needed, but we



BUSINESS AND MINISTRY — Gene Mims, a LifeWay vice president, said presidents of the 111-year-old entity often balanced ministry and business but were always passionate about the mission of the institution. Mims was the featured speaker at LifeWay's Anniversary Chapel on May 17. (Photo by Kent Harville)

needed educated people. From him we learned the true value of a Baptist spirit."

◆ **T.L. Holcomb** (president from 1935-1953): "He was always for the pastors and for the churches. He left the administrative work of the Sunday School Board to other

people, because he always wanted to be on the outside preaching and leading revivals."

"He was a reluctant president. We learn from him that our work is always for and to the local church."

◆ **James L. Sullivan** (president from 1953-1975): "He is

arguably the greatest leader we've ever had. He served in the transition of the greatest magnitude and moved easily between business and ministry. He knew the denomination like none before him and knew the board and all the details of it."

"His hallmark position was to always keep the board in the center, not the right and not to the left, of every issue and opportunity. We learn from him the lessons from the center."

Sullivan is a native of Tylertown who lives in retirement in Nashville.

◆ **Grady C. Cothen** (president from 1975-1984): "He came to the board with a love of the Bible. He brought a spirit of risk and undertaking. Remember BTN [the Baptist Telecommunications Network satellite system]? He brought the greatest denominational background of any of the presidents."

"We learned from him the willingness to try new things and dream new dreams. We learned that risk is in order as the denomination changes."

◆ **Lloyd Elder** (president from 1984-1991): "He came to the board during the time of the greatest modern upheaval. He came during the time of a changing board of trustees, a changing convention, a changing institution. During this time, he worked tirelessly to do what he could."

"He often said that he would do what he could do with what he had for as long as he was given. We learn from him the ethic of hard work and kingdom focus in difficult times."

◆ **James T. Draper Jr.** (president from 1991 to the present): "His history is still to be written. His spirit and dedication and his love for pastors is obvious. What we're learning from him is that it's not what you do, but who you are. Who you are makes the greatest difference in leadership."

Don't preach in Uzbek language, official orders church group

LONDON (BP) — A Pentecostal church group in Uzbekistan has been ordered not to preach in the Uzbek language, the state language of the Central Asian country, according to a May 27 report from the London-based Keston News Service which was picked up and republished by Baptist Press.

The order is one of several developments in Uzbekistan "which could soon lead to a significant restriction on religious freedom in our country," according to an open letter from press officer Dmitri Pitirimov of the Evangelical Christians/Baptists of Uzbekistan.

Pitirimov's letter recounted that the Tashkent-based head of a Full Gospel church, Bishop Sergei Nechitailo, was summoned to the Committee for Religious Affairs, where the committee's deputy chairman, Shoazim Minovarov, demanded that his denomination's churches stop preaching in Uzbek.

Contacted by Keston on May 22, Minovarov stated, "I confirm the report that we advised Nechitailo to stop preaching in the Uzbek language, and also that we asked him not to distribute Uzbek-language religious literature from the Church of Christians of the Full Gospel."

Minovarov continued, "The fact is that there has

been a large number of complaints about the Church of Christians of the Full Gospel of Uzbekistan from residents in the mahalla [city sector] where it is based. People have expressed concern that members of the church are trying to persuade Uzbeks to turn away from Islam and convert to their religion."

Minovarov told Keston that a similar request was made to the Jehovah's Witnesses. "Members of the Jehovah's Witnesses have been going to people's homes, trying to preach their beliefs. You must understand that such behavior is unthinkable according to Uzbek tradition. For example, an Uzbek cannot go even to his brother's house if there is no man in the household at the time."

Asked by Keston whether any Uzbek law prohibits the preaching of Christianity in the state language, Minovarov replied: "According to the law on religion 'actions intended to convert believers of one confession to another (proselytism and also any other missionary activity) are forbidden. The actions of the Christians of the Full Gospel and of the Jehovah's Witnesses constituted proselytism."

Also cited in the open letter from Pitirimov of the Evangelical Christians/Baptists of Uzbekistan:

● Pravda Vostoka, an official state newspaper, published an article on May 8 based on an interview with Metropolitan Vladimir (Ikim), head of the Orthodox Church in Central Asia, who spoke out strongly against the spread of Protestantism in Uzbekistan.

"The substance of this article demonstrates clearly that a course of action has been taken to toughen religious policy on the rapidly-growing Evangelical Christian movements," Pitirimov wrote.

● Eighteen Christians, including two foreigners, recently were detained in the western Uzbek city of Nukus following an investigation into the sources of Christian literature in Central Asian languages and were accused of holding a seminar unlawfully. Pitirimov's letter gave no further details about the events in Nukus.

Sergei Mitin, chairman of the Tashkent-based Bible Society of Uzbekistan, told Keston by telephone, "We are very concerned about recent events. It is impossible to rule out the possibility that the authorities are beginning a campaign against Protestant communities in the republic."

Pitirimov urged the Keston News Service reporter, "Please give maximum publicity to these developments in Uzbekistan."

THE SONG OF THE CICADAS

For several weeks all around central Mississippi, it was hard to go through a day without somebody commenting on the whirring sound coming from up in the trees.

One man said that around his house it sounded like a plane was hovering over his roof all the time. The cicadas came out in full force and could be heard all around the central Mississippi area.

Now, I do not know if everybody was affected and infected by those creatures, but around here it was an invasion of biblical proportions!

Most of us got an education in cicadas or at least we got reacquainted with them. The problem is we'll probably forget all we learned by the time they come around again.

According to all the news reports, they only come out every 13 years. People usually call them locusts, but they aren't. They are cicadas. They come out, fly around, sing in the trees, mate, plant their eggs, and die.

Thirteen years from now we can look for the next crop to appear. I don't think they really did any particular harm. I picked up several of them to show to the kids and saw dozens of their leftover skins hanging on the barks of trees.

I went places where it sounded like they were swarming overhead and I was at other places where you could hear them way off in the distance making their unusual, haunting sound.

What I found to be the most interesting was not the cicadas themselves, but people, and their reaction to the sounds the cicada made — the "song" of the cicada.

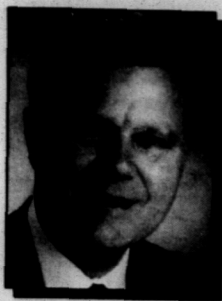
One bright and buoyant spirit, with eyes lit up and excitement in her voice said, "Listen to that! Isn't that neat? I really enjoy hearing the sounds that they make."

On another occasion, a different person with not quite the same feeling about the cicada song said, "I've had about all of that noise I can take! It looks like they could spray something and kill all of them; or, it looks like they would get tired and shut up after a while."

Still others, living in the same world, did not even hear the sound and were oblivious to the song unless you called attention to it — then they just replied, "Hmmm."

It seems to me that it has always been that way in regards to music. Whether it is a cicada or a soloist, everybody has an opinion about it. Those who make the music have their view and those who are the recipients of the sounds have their opinion.

As a pastor, it is not unusual at all to receive unsolicited, but interesting, critiques on the Sunday morning soloist. One person may say something like, "She has the most beautiful



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

voice. I love to hear her sing. She has the most trained voice in our church."

Reacting to the same song and singer, another may say something like, "I wish they wouldn't let her sing so much. I just can't stand to hear her voice."

The cicada raised some issues for me that seem to be around us all the time.

• **Each of us ought to work on our own spiritual sensitivity that would enable us to discern, grasp, and enjoy the gifts of other people.**

You would sometimes think the only reason some people sing, teach, preach, or serve is so that we will have material to critique and criticize. The cicadas are simply doing what God has gifted them to do and I doubt they really care whether we brag on them or complain about them.

It might be a blessing if we could learn to see the glorious cycle of life and adventure that is going on around us. The difference in what we perceive and enjoy is not so much in the event as what kind of attitude resides in us.

It is not the voice of the soloist, or the harmony of the choir, or the theological depth of the sermon that is the issue so much as it is the love and care and supportiveness in us.

Just think about it. A person may work hard for weeks praying about and exercising their vocal chords to get the right

tonal qualities to present a beautiful message in song on a Sunday morning and they walk up to the platform and we sit there with our heads cocked and ears perked, ready to evaluate what they are going to do.

The music begins, the song is sung, and we hear a spot or two where they could have enunciated better, or used better depth control, or avoided getting out of their range. When they finish, we just sit thoughtfully evaluating.

Now think about this. My four-year-old grandchild, who can only hit about two notes in a three-line song, shyly and reluctantly walks with her friends up the steps of the platform one Sunday morning.

She too has worked on the song, but not in front of all these people. She wants to wave but she's been told not to. She tries to smile but it's tough in front of all these faces. She plays with her dress, and you pray, "Dear Lord, don't let her pick her nose!"

The music begins, they mumble through the song, and the place breaks out in warm, supportive, encouraging, loving applause. My friends, the difference is not in the performance — the difference is in our hearts!

• **The cicadas also reminded me that all of us have personal opinions and enjoy different things. Whether or not you like or do not like their song is immaterial.**

Some do and some don't. If you do, it does not make you good, and if you do not, it does not make you evil, or vice-versa. Each of us likes what we like and dislikes what we don't like; yet, we always seem to want to raise it to a high moral plane that makes everybody else look like they are wrong.

I remember a pastor who got into trouble at his new church because he did not recite The Lord's Prayer each Sunday morning.

Some years later, I knew of a young seminary graduate who had gone to his first church right out of school and he got into trouble because he led the congregation in saying The Lord's Prayer each Sunday morning. They said that it was too liberal and smacked of Catholicism!

Maybe a little grace could grease the wheels of our opinionated spirits and maybe a little understanding would broaden our appreciation of what is going on.

• **One final thing that my cicada friends taught me during those few weeks is that life changes.**

According to what the bug people tell us, they will not be back for 13 more years. So, if you liked them, you are going to have to exercise some patience before you are going to hear and see them again, at least in those numbers.

If you did not like them, just relax, you've got a long time to fester and worry about them returning.

However you felt about the cicada's song, I encourage you to get on about the Kingdom business of our Lord Jesus and stop spending time fretting about the little creatures.

School board resolution slammed

HAYWARD, Calif. (BP) — A legal organization has taken a California school district to task over pro-homosexual classroom policies adopted by the board of education in response to the California Student Safety and Violence Prevention Act of 2000.

The Pacific Justice Institute of Citrus Heights, Calif., which specializes in the defense of religious freedom, parental rights, and other civil liberties, sent a letter May 22 demanding that the Hayward Unified School District rescind an April 10 resolution establishing a Safe Schools for All plan that includes unrestricted classroom discussion of homosexuality without parental consent.

The Hayward school board resolution notes that its Safe Schools For All initiative is "intended to address the issues of school safety for all students and staff, particularly lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning youth and staff."

Under the California Student Safety and Violence Prevention Act of 2000, school district employees, "like those of all public entities, are prohibited from discriminating against individuals on the basis of race, gender, ethnicity, age, religious creed, sexual preference and/or orientation, marital status, physical or mental disability, ancestry or national origin."

The Hayward resolution, meanwhile, states that the school district "has an obligation to provide proper training to comply with applicable laws and board policies to support safe environments for students and staff that are free from discrimination, violence or abuse."

Churches mourn bridge victims

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Southern Baptists in Oklahoma and Arkansas are coping with the loss of two active church families who were killed when a 600-foot span of Interstate 40 in Oklahoma collapsed into the waters of the Arkansas River on May 26.

Wayne and Susan Martin of Norman, Okla., both 49, were headed to a family reunion in Clarksville, Ark. and were crossing the bridge when it plunged more than 70 feet into the river. Family members learned of their deaths after the Martins failed to show up at the reunion.

The Martins, along with their two daughters who were not on the trip, were active members of First Church, Norman. Wayne Martin was a deacon, and Susan Martin was a Sunday School teacher.

Wayne Martin was a detective and 27-year veteran of the Norman Police Department who planned to retire in 2003. His wife worked periodically at the Family Life Center of First Church, Norman. No funeral arrangements had been announced by press deadline.

Residents in two small Arkansas towns are also mourning the loss of a young family killed when their car plunged over the collapsed bridge. James Johnson, his wife Misty, and their three-year-old daughter Shea Nicole were driving to the Tulsa Zoo and were just two miles from their exit when the bridge disappeared beneath them. The Johnsons lived in Lavaca, Ark., and worked in Paris, Ark.

James was a member of the First Church, Paris, Ark. His mother, Juanita Johnson, and Misty's parents, Hursel and Linda Henson, also are members of the Southern Baptist church. James was a truck driver for Wonder-Hostess Baking Co. and Misty was a clerk and bookkeeper for Rose Drug in Paris. The couple had lived in Lavaca for a few years so James could be closer to his job. Their bodies were recovered May 27. Shea's body was found floating about a half-mile downriver on May 29.

"We're all just hoping it's a dream," said Steve Rice, a pharmacy technician at the drug store where Misty worked. Joyce Scrivner, secretary at First Church, said she had known James since kindergarten and had known Misty since the age of four.

Tim Prock, pastor of the church, said the church had been providing food for the family as well as visiting and praying with them. "You just do what you can," he said. "The only thing we can do is love them." Prock said his Sunday morning worship service message on June 2 was titled, "What is really important in life?"

More than one third of the bridge fell after a towboat pushed a barge into a bridge support. The towboat is owned by a Vicksburg subsidiary of Jackson-based Ergon, Inc., and towboat's captain is a resident of Florence. The bodies of 14 people have been pulled from the river.

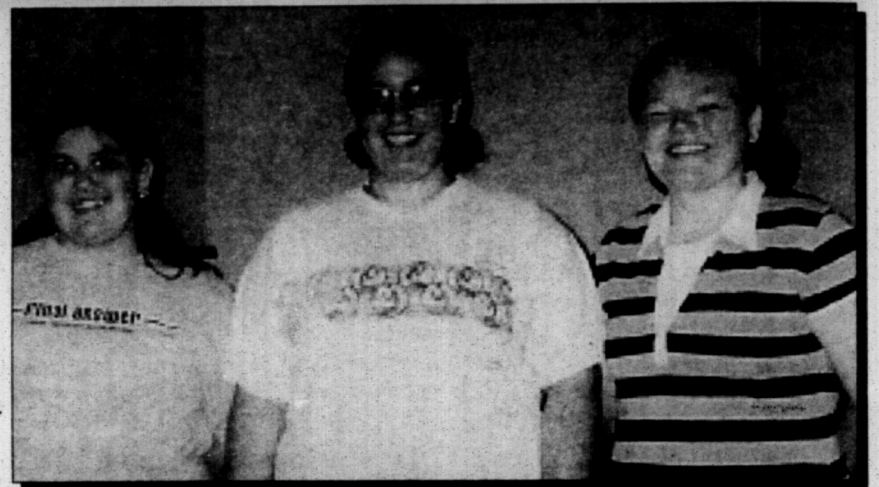
JUST FOR THE RECORD

Piave Church, Richton, will observe Founder's Day on June 23. Following the 10:30 a.m. service, a group picture will be taken and a covered dish meal will be served. A sharing time will be held at 1:30 p.m. in the sanctuary. Joe H. Cothen will be the guest speaker. James T. Dunnam is pastor.

Liberty Church, Noxapater, held its sesquicentennial celebration on May 5. Former pastors in attendance were Herb Nettleton, Paul Wilson, Ben McDaniel, and Bobby Parish. Grady Woods is pastor. The church had a record attendance of over 400 for the day.

Crossgates Church, Brandon, will present TRUTH, The Final Chapter, on June 9 at 6 p.m. For additional information, call (601) 825-2562.

Providence Church, Carroll Association, presented a skit about Edwina Robinson for the special day offering during the morning worship service on April 21. On program were Miriam Smith, speaker, and Carl Hopkins, minister of music. Bennie Watson is pastor. Pictured (from left) are Hopkins, Smith, and Watson. Youth pictured (from left) are Kasey Wenger, Melissa Swope, and Felisha Ferguson.



Wenger, Swope, and Ferguson

VBS dates

Beacon, Hattiesburg: June 17-21; 6:30-8:30 p.m.; age 3-grade 12.

Escatawpa, Escatawpa: June 24-28; 6-8:30 p.m.; Greg Johnston, pastor.

Riverside, Pascagoula: June 24-28; 9 a.m.-noon; age 4-grade 6; Cecil Rice, pastor; for additional information, call (228) 762-9329.

Holly Church, Corinth: June 24-28; 6-8 p.m.; Tony Morrow, pastor.

First Church Overt: June 9-14; 6-9 p.m.; ages 3 and up; family Night will be held June 14; for other information contact Patricia King at (601) 344-7599.



Friends and Family Day at Harmony Church, Crystal Springs

Harmony Church, Crystal Springs, recently observed Friends and Family Day, a day of fellowship and dinner on the grounds following morning worship. Clark Stewart is pastor.

Wade Church, Moss Point, held a ribbon cutting ceremony on May 19 for the Bill Barton Family Life Center. The 30,000 square foot building is a multi-purpose facility. Pictured at the



Wade Church, Moss Point, ribbon cutting



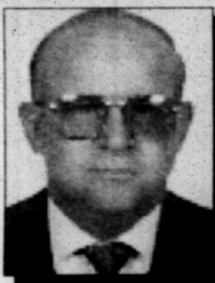
Hopkins, Smith, and Watson

ribbon cutting are are (from left) Cindy Dickerson; Brian Barfield; Mark Taylor, chairman of the building committee; Bill Barton, pastor; Danny Wildman, chairman of the deacons; and Ken Marble, chairman of Stay on the Wall.



STAFF CHANGES

Camp Ground Church, Water Valley, has called Emon White as pastor effective May 5. He previously served Antioch Church, Sturgis.



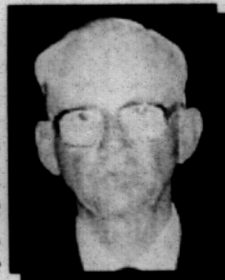
White

Riverside Church, Pascagoula, has called Cecil Rice as pastor effective May 5. He previously served at Lackland Church, San Antonio, Texas.

Joe Holcomb will retire after 41 years in the ministry due to health conditions. His last pastorate was at Pilgrim's Rest Church in Calhoun County. Holcomb is available for supply

preaching and can be contacted at (662) 489-8789 and his mailing address is 5083 New Hope Road, Pontotoc, MS 38863.

William Edward (Ed) Smith, Meridian, will retire from the pastorate effective July 1, having served for 51 years in Alabama and Mississippi. He first served Oak Grove Church, Clarke County, Ala., in 1951. A graduate of New Orleans Seminary in 1958, he went on to serve seven more churches, the last church was Liberty Church, Toomsaba, for 25 years. Smith may be contacted at 2530 Freedom Baptist



Smith

Church, Meridian, MS 39301, or call (601) 693-1440.

James Case has recently retired from the active pastorate of Concord Church, McCall Creek. He is available for supply, interim, or revivals, and can be contacted at 443 West Lincoln Dr. S. W., Brookhaven, MS 39601, or call (601) 833-8244.

Jill Hicks, a native of Meridian, is serving as a summer youth ministry intern at Carterville Church, Petal. She is currently a student at Baylor University. Ben Skipper serves as minister to students.

Old Hebron Church, Newhebron, has called Jonathan Wade Haines as pastor effective May 19. He previously served at Shiloh Church, Houlika.

Look at the big picture.

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BAPTIST HEALTH LINE
Registered Nurses Available
www.mbhs.org



What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the

HOUSE TOPS

Matthew 10:27 NAS

June 6, 2002

HouseTops is a Baptist Record supplement produced by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Communication Services.

HANDBELL SKILLS CLINIC

Friday, August 9, 7-9 p.m. – Saturday, August 10, 8:30 a.m.-noon
First Baptist Church, Canton

For Ringers and Directors

This clinic is designed to assist handbell choirs in basic, intermediate, and advanced skills in ringing. You may bring all of your choir or a single ringer. Ringers will be taught skills relating to their bell assignments.

Handbell ringers need to bring enough handbells, pads and tables to cover their assignments (see bell assignments below).

BUILDING HANDBELL SKILLS FOR YOUR RINGERS

- Ringing the bass bells
- Change ringing for middle and upper bells
- Four/in hand for upper bells
- The Shake, Brush Damp, Ring Touch, and Echo Ring
- Stopped bells skills: Mallets, Martellato, Thumb Damp, and Plucking
- Beginning and advanced conducting

Bring your ringers to this two-day skills clinic and get your handbell choir off to a great start this fall.

The cost is \$2 per person.

REGISTRATION

Church _____ Association _____

Number of ringers attending _____ Number of octaves used _____

Bell assignments for each ringer attending

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Make check payable to the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board. Mail check and registration to the Church Music Department, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205.

BAPTIST HYMNALS NEEDED FOR AFRICAN SEMINARY

The only seminary in Africa offering a graduate degree in church music is in Ogbomosho, Nigeria. Currently, most African church choirs sing only the melody of hymns from memory, for they have only the words without music.

Jimmy McCaleb, Church Music Department consultant, after teaching a course at this seminary, has a burden to provide our fellow Baptist musicians in Africa with 5,000 copies of the 1991 Baptist Hymnal. Their choirs could then proclaim the theology of our Baptist faith in beautiful four-part harmony! As of August, 2001, 3,000 hymnals have been given and sent.

You can help with a financial gift. One hymnal is \$5. A box of 20 is \$100. If you or your church group would like to participate in this ministry, please call Jimmy McCaleb at (601) 292-3273, 1 (800) 748-1651 or E-mail him at jmccaleb@mbcb.org.

Checks may be made out to the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board and mailed to:

Jimmy McCaleb
MBCB
P.O. Box 530
Jackson, MS 39205

THE BAPTIST HYMNAL

Mississippi Baptist Convention State Softball Tournament 2002 Tournament Dates

Class	Sunday School Enrollment	Dates
A	up to 300	July 19 & 20
AA	301-700	July 26 & 27
AAA	701 and above	August 9 & 10

For more info call Men's Ministry, 1 (800) 748-1651, or (601) 292-3335



Stacey Spencer
Worship Leader



Jake Gullede
Music
Worship Leader

Super Summer 2002

July 15-19, Mississippi College

For more info contact: Harvey Ellis, Discipleship and Family Ministry, (601) 292-3286 or 1 (800) 748-1651

Growing Churches Through Discipleship

Gulfshore Baptist Assembly • July 25-27



Higher Faith Quartet
leading Friday evening
worship

- *Teaching and training for the whole family: preschool, children, youth and adults*
- *Hear Speakers Tournament winners*
- *See demonstration Bible drill*
- *Recreational activities include:*
 - *Beachfront swimming*
 - *Fishing • Sand play • Tennis courts*
 - *Olympic-sized swimming pool*
 - *The beautiful Mississippi Gulf Coast surrounding the assembly grounds*

Mississippi churches and families can **make reservations NOW** by calling Frank Simmons at (228) 452-7261. (Visa and MasterCard are accepted for deposits.)

For info about program, call Don Hicks at (601) 292-3287 in Jackson, or 1 (800) 748-1651.



Gulfshore Baptist Assembly
Pass Christian

Single Again Conference

Saturday, June 22, 2002
Bethel Baptist Church, Monticello

Conferences:

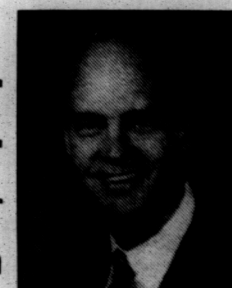
Widowhood – Farley Earnest, Brandon

Divorce – James Haynes, FBC, Biloxi
Minister of Singles, Counselor

Single-Parenting – Wayne Hudson
VanCleave, Author

Cost: \$10, payable at the door
For directions and information
call 601-587-4661

Keynote Speaker
Ron Mumbower
Family Counselor
FBC, Jackson



With every breath, with every song... I praise You!

Gulfshore Music Leadership Conference

Gulfshore Baptist Assembly, July 11-13, 2002

100 First Street • Pass Christian, MS • (228) 452-7261

Registration begins at 1:30 p.m.

COST: "A" Unit – \$92

"C" Unit – \$83

Handbell Audition: 3 p.m.

Sponsored by the Church Music Department

L. Graham Smith, Director

Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

Jim Fernal, Executive Director-Treasurer



Carl White
CAMP PASTOR
Pastor
Highland Baptist
Church
Meridian, Miss.



Ron Boud
ORGAN
Professor of Music
and University
Organist
Union University
Jackson, Tenn.



Mary McDonald
PIANO
Composer/Arranger
President
Monarch Music
Knoxville, Tenn.



Tim Moak
ELECTRONIC KEYBOARDS
Minister of Music
Cleary Baptist Church
Cleary, Miss.



Anita Bice
PRESCHOOL
Editor-in-Chief
Music Publishing and
Recording
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Barbara Sanders
YOUNGER CHILDREN
Children's Choir
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Oak Hill School



Terry Taylor
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FBC, Dothan, Ala.
Curriculum Writer
and Composer for
Children's Music



Lynell Vaughn
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EMPHASIS
Associate Professor of
Church Music
Southwestern Baptist
Theological Seminary



Bill Herman
PRaise TEAM ORGANIZATION AND MATERIALS
Minister of Music
Newhebron Baptist
Church
Newhebron, Miss.

Mississippi Baptist Youth Night 2002

Mississippi Coliseum, Jackson
Friday, July 19, 2002 • 6:30-9:00 p.m.



David Nasser
Sr.



Exit 10
Worship Leaders

Plan Now to Bring Your Church Youth Group

Now
is the
Hour

Worship

Sunday School Directors Discipleship Training Directors' Dinner and Workshop

*From the Basics to the Advanced
Get a Grip on Your Ministry!*

Tuesday, August 6, 2002

Tuesday, August 13, 2002

No Cost for this Event
But Reservations are Required!

Sponsored by the
Sunday School Department and the
Discipleship Training and Family Ministry Department
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board and
LifeWay Christian Resources

This workshop is designed for the
Discipleship Training
director, the Sunday School director,
pastor, minister of
education, and associational missions
director to learn more about the
importance of the Discipleship and
Sunday School ministries.

Participants will learn the principles
of visionary leadership, along with
specifics on how to plan and imple-
ment an effective Discipleship and
Sunday School ministry in your
church.

A meal will be served at no charge.
The workshop will
follow.

Reservations are required
by July 29.

Preregistration Form

Sunday School & Discipleship Training Directors' Workshop

Name _____
Day phone number _____
Mailing address _____
City _____ St _____ Zip _____

I serve _____ Baptist church
in _____ Miss., as:

- ☐ Sunday School Director
☐ Discipleship Training Director
☐ Pastor
☐ Minister of Education
☐ Other

I will attend the workshop at:
☐ State Boulevard, Meridian
☐ Emmanuel, Grenada

Preregister by July 29, 2002

Complete and return to the Sunday School
Department, PO Box 530, Jackson MS 39205

Contact information:

Mississippi Baptist Convention Board
Sunday School Department or Discipleship
Training and Family Ministry Department
PO Box 530
Jackson MS 39205
1 (800) 748-1651 or (601) 968-3800 locally
Fax: (601) 714-7430

You may register online at www.mbc.org on
the Sunday School Department home page.

Pray this day for...

June 7 - 20, 2002

Prayer Ministry Office • P.O. Box 530 • Jackson, MS 39205-0530 • Phone (601) 292-3304 • Mississippi PrayerLine 1 (800) 787-7729 (PRAY)

"God must give. We must ask. We must be faithful to ask, and then trust God to do the giving."

Andrew Murray, a South African pastor and theologian

For: (1) WMU, SBC Annual Meeting, St. Louis, Mo. (WMU); (2) Divorce is becoming a major problem in China. Pray for Christians to minister effectively to those struggling to keep their marriages together.

For: (1) All fathers today on Father's Day; (2) The Venezuelan Univ. Students Team writes: "Many of the universities where we minister are having to close their doors for the lack of government funding. This makes it extremely difficult to contact our people group. Pray for this ministry."

For: (1) GA Camp, 10th - 14th, Garaywa (WMU); (2) Royal Ambassador/Challenger Camp, 10th - 14th, Central Hills, Kosciusko (MM); (3) Please pray today for Premier Zhu Rongji of China.

For: (1) VI Youth Conference, 17th - 21st, Gulfshore (MBCB); (2) GA Camp, 17th - 21st, Garaywa (WMU); (3) Royal Ambassador/Challenger Camp 17th - 21st, Central Hills, Kosciusko (MM); (4) Please pray today for President Andres Pastrana of Colombia (northwestern South America).

For: (1) Southern Baptist Convention 11th - 12th, St. Louis, MO; (2) A salon for women has recently been opened in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Pray that upper-class women of the city might find this to be a comfortable venue for hearing the Good News

A young Minangkabau woman, D., in Indonesia, is sharing her heart and family difficulties with a believer. Although a staunch Muslim, she is heavily leaning on her Christian friend for guidance. Pray that every word of the believer would be guided by the Holy Spirit. Pray for D., that her heart would be open to hear the truth.

Pray for missionary Barbara Akins who is using friendship evangelism to reach out to Miss K. who runs a karaoke bar frequented by businessmen. She was deeply moved by Jesus' words, "Man does not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." Pray that Barbara will be able to lead her to Christ.

(1) Wesley Garrett directs the Johnning Baptist Center in inner-city Washington. Pray for wisdom for Wesley as he seeks to be God's messenger to the people in Washington, D.C. (2) Pray for Ethiopian national Christians who have been given the ministry of reconciliation and are reaching out to Muslims in their areas.

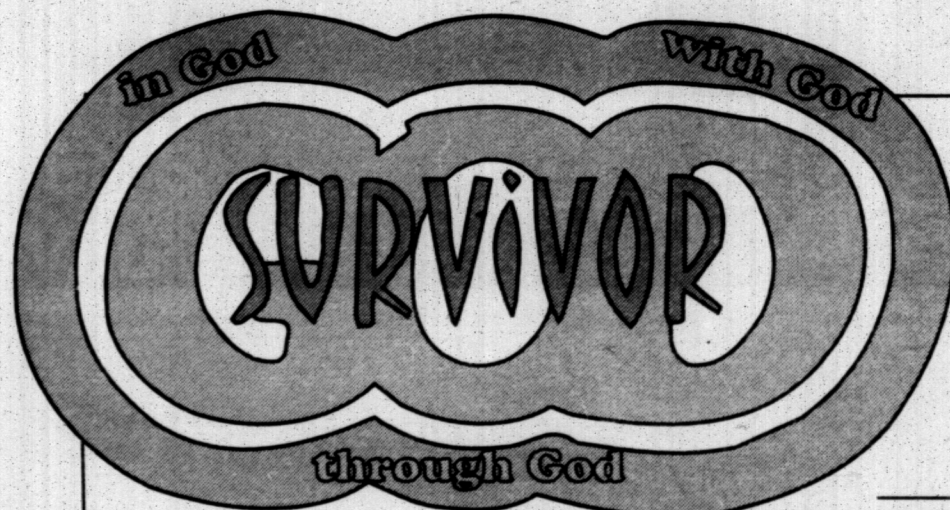
For: (1) V Youth Conference, 13th - 17th, Gulfshore (MBCB); (2) Praise the Lord for 25 new Muslim-background believers baptized in a river in Asia in April. Pray for this new group of Christians to stand firm in the face of persecution and that their lives will reflect Christ to family and neighbors.

Give thanks to the Father for a shipment of Turkish Bibles that arrived recently in the United Kingdom. Intercede for each person who will receive a copy over the coming months. Claim the promise that the Father's Word will not return void.

In one of the main Birfor villages, Vargbo of Cote D'Ivoire, many people are ready to change from their old ways and become Christians. For five evenings in May, Missionary Phillip Lyons will lead them in a Chronological Bible Story Conference. Pray that this will develop into several small Bible study groups.

For: (1) International Family Festival, Starkville (D&FM); (2) IV Youth Conference, Gulfshore (MBCB); (3) Workers in Sri Lanka write: "We want to thank you all for praying for the translation of 'Experiencing God'! It is now in the editing stage. We are now beginning other translation work, so continue to pray."

The Fulbe Jerri Team of Senegal writes: "In March, you prayed for the success of the well project. One has been deepened to 90 meters and has a good supply of water for the Fulbe Jerri people. Another will be started soon. Our ministry with the wells can be a means to open the door to share the gospel with the Fulbe."



PRESCHOOL/CHILDREN'S LEADERSHIP FESTIVAL

November 15 & 16, 2002
Main Street Baptist Church, Hattiesburg

SURVIVOR; in God, with God, through God.

Keynote Speaker: Rhonda Reeves, Preschool Editor for National WMU

For: All preschool and children's teachers
and leaders in Sunday School, Discipleship,
Missions, and Christian Education

Cost: \$10 each (with group of 10, the 11th
conferee is free!)

Registration: Begins at 3:15 Friday
afternoon and continues Saturday

For more information:

Call the Preschool/Children's Squad:
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board at 1 (800) 748-1651
or in Jackson, (601) 968-3800.

Don Hicks in Discipleship and Family Ministry
Robin Keels in WMU
Linda Reeves in Sunday School

HOUSE TOPS

NAMES IN THE NEWS



Stephanie and Jeff Gilder

Parkway Church, Hernando, recently ordained Jeff Gilder as a deacon. Pictured with Gilder is his wife Stephanie.

April 28. The new facilities, now under construction, will seat 350. Pictured (from left) are Rod Martin; Don Cagle; Sue Bowlin; June Owens; Ira Head; Danny Farmer, chairman; Wayne Magee; and Walter Bell. David Crowe is pastor.

Highland Church, Laurel, recently ordained Chad Sewell and Luke Johnson to the ministry. Sewell serves as pastor of Chapparral Church, Wayne Association, and is a student at New Orleans Seminary. Johnson serves as minister of youth at Pine Grove Church, Jones Association, and is a student at the University of Southern Mississippi. Pictured (from left) are Sewell; Dennis Sewell, pastor emeritus of Highland Church, who preached the ordination sermon; and Johnson.



Chad Sewell, Dennis Sewell, and Luke Johnson

Nathan Harper was ordained to the ministry at West Jackson Church, Tupelo, on March 3. He is the associate pastor of the Church at Huntington, Northport, Ala. He previously served as minister of students at Trinity Church, Fulton, and Meadow Church, Amory. Nathan Harper is pictured with his father Bert Harper, pastor.



Nathan and Bert Harper



Deacons and wives of Macedonia Church, Petal

The deacons and their wives of Macedonia Church, Petal, recently sponsored a trip for the widows (pictured) to Rivers' Kountry Katfish in Ellisville. Nelson Crozier is pastor.

Strong Hope Church, Wesson, held ground breaking ceremonies for a sanctuary on



Strong Hope Church, Wesson, ground breaking

Poplar Springs Church, Newton, recently held its annual Walk-A-Thon and raised \$3,000 for The Baptist Children's Village. Chip Price shared a message of the continuing need, help, and hope that is to be found at the Village. Charles Bonner is pastor.



Poplar Springs Church, Newton

MS POSITIONS AVAILABLE

BI-VOCATIONAL MINISTER OF MUSIC sought by church averaging 110 in Sunday School. Please e-mail resume to mwsjgh@vicksburg.com or fax to (601) 636-7574 or mail to Calvary Baptist Church, 2878 Old Hwy. 27, Vicksburg, MS 39180.

HURLEY BAPTIST CHURCH, Hurley, Miss., is seeking a full-time minister of music and youth. Please send resume to: Hurley Baptist Search Committee, P.O. Box 395, Hurley, MS 39555.

MID-SIZED CHURCH seeking part-time minister of music. Steep Hollow Baptist Church, Poplarville, Miss. Two Sunday morning services plus Wednesday night services. Please call (601) 795-4638 or fax resume to (601) 795-4696.

HILLCREST BAPTIST CHURCH (which is re-locating to 5950 Terry Road in Byram) is looking for a part-time contemporary style worship leader. Please send resume to Victor Dorman, Hillcrest Baptist Church, 3102 Monticello Drive, Jackson, MS 39212 or fax to (601) 372-0285.

1119 Mississippi Churches Can't Be Wrong.

More than 1100 churches throughout Mississippi put their faith in Wellington Associates for comprehensive insurance services including property, general, and specific liability, vehicle, workers compensation, and other coverages. Wellington guarantees a quality program, customized for your ministry, at the most competitive premium rates.

For references and more information, call Mike Brooks at 601-353-2400 or 1-800-442-0290.



YOU CAN RESPOND RIGHT NOW!

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. *(I have sinned.)*
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. *(I repent.)*
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. *(I believe in Jesus.)*
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with him. *(I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)*

But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name (John 1:12).

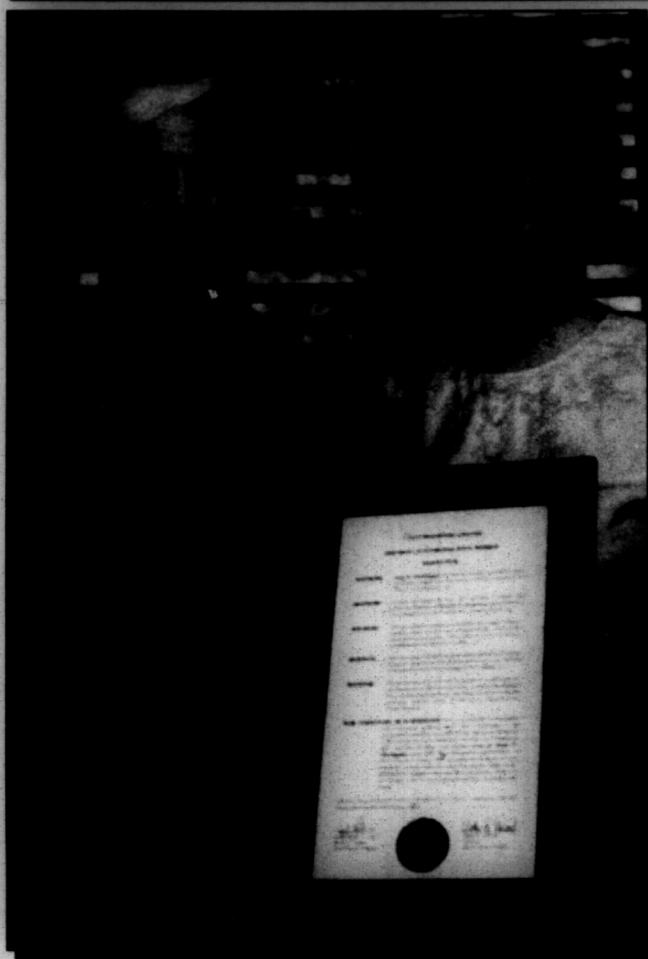
If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

Revival

Magnolia, Laurel: June 16-19; Sunday, regular times; Mon.-Wed., noon and 7 p.m.; Randall Creel, Lake, evangelist; Bobby Sanderson, Columbus, music.

Homecoming

Bethel, Monticello: June 9; celebrating 150 years; Sunday School, 9:30 a.m.; worship, 10:30 a.m.; dinner in fellowship hall; afternoon singing; Ken Marler, Nashville, Tenn., guest speaker; The Smiths, Monticello, guest singers; W. R. (Bill) Miller, pastor.



Jean Harrington (above, right), an assistant in the registrar's office at Blue Mountain College (BMC), was selected by the Board of Trustees as the Outstanding Staff Member for 2002. She is pictured receiving the award from BMC President Betty R. Coward. Harrington has worked at BMC for nine years after retiring from 33 years of teaching in public schools. She has participated on various committees, advised students, and served as director of Placement and Career Services.

tion, a ball, T-shirt, lodging, meals, and insurance coverage. Campers will have a highly organized schedule and be continually supervised. Space is limited. Applications will be processed in the order they are received. For more information or to obtain an application call Doug Stovall at (228) 897-7144 or email dsrstovall@aol.com.

The William Carey College Crusader Yearbook and Cobbler Newspaper organizations honored students at its

Melanie Pryor, Calhoun City; Kim Sides, Ripley; and Scarlett Adams, Mantachie.

The World Cup Residential Soccer Camp will be held July 5-8 on the William Carey College Hattiesburg campus, from 7:30-9:30 p.m. each day. The camp is open to boys and girls of any school age. They will be divided into separate age groups for training. Cost of the camp is \$225 per camper and includes special instruction, a ball, T-shirt, lodging, meals, and insurance coverage. Campers will have a highly organized schedule and be continually supervised. Space is limited. Applications will be processed in the order they are received. For more information or to obtain an application call Doug Stovall at (228) 897-7144 or email dsrstovall@aol.com.

premier Student Publication Awards Banquet held recently on the Hattiesburg campus. Receiving awards were Heidi Averill, St. Louis, Mo.; Michael Avery, Carrollton, Ga.; Keisha Beasley, Tupelo; Dustin Benge, Taylorsville; Karen Bowlby, Zachary, La.; Valerie Brewer, Brandon; Alan Burchfield, Columbus; Terry Dale Cruse, Columbus; Amanda Eady, Braxton; Renee Estes, McCall Creek; Tabitha Frizzell, Florence; Matt Fondren, Columbus; Frankie Glennis, Summit; Chad Hampton, Florence; Jonathan Hill, Southaven; Michael Johnson, Belzoni; Karen Bowlby, Zachary, La.; Karen Napp, Meridian. College (WCC). Larry Kennedy, president of WCC, recognized Benji were Rocky Pugh, Sessums (left) of Lena and Tiffanie Columbus; Jana Quigley, Cooper (right) of Slidell, La., as Mr. and Destin, Fla.; Mitchell Miss William Carey College.



The annual Honors Day ceremony was held recently at William Carey College (WCC). Larry Kennedy, president of WCC, recognized Benji were Rocky Pugh, Sessums (left) of Lena and Tiffanie Columbus; Jana Quigley, Cooper (right) of Slidell, La., as Mr. and Destin, Fla.; Mitchell Miss William Carey College. Smith, Yazoo City; Joy Stodghill, Waynesboro; and Robin Vick, Bogalusa, received an honorable mention for Best Editorial Writing. An honorable mention was awarded to Lance Baggett, Monticello.

Adopt-An-Annuitant Sunday

June 23, 2002

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The 2002 Blue Mountain College Mountaineer staff (above) recently presented the 2002 Mountaineer yearbook. The staff selected the theme A Place Called Home. Staff pictured (from left) include Sandra Foster, Meridian; Heather Bland, New Albany; Sue Ann Ethridge, advisor; Katie Cappleman, Rock Spring, Ga.; Carol Hall, Ripley; Jessica Kennedy, Middleton, Tenn.;

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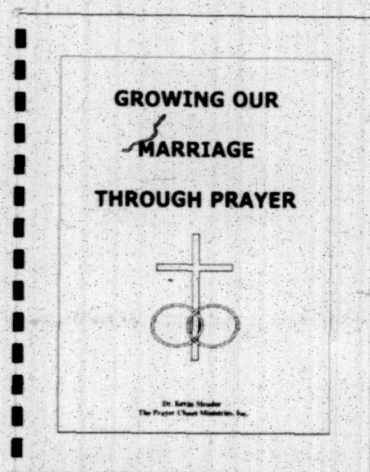
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Growing Our Marriage Through Prayer

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Manual

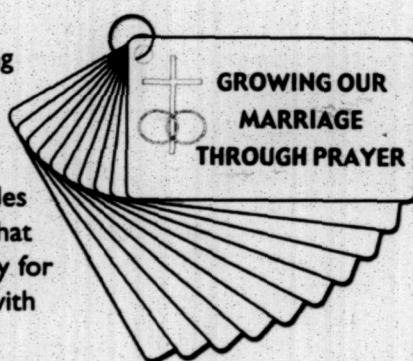
This prayer manual offers an abundance of scripture prayers and strategies for your marriage. It is ideal for helping couples build a quiet time together.

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This prayer key ring enables you to pray the Word of God for your marriage. It provides scripture prayers that can be used to pray for your relationship with your spouse.

Suggested donation: \$2



Becoming A Praying Husband

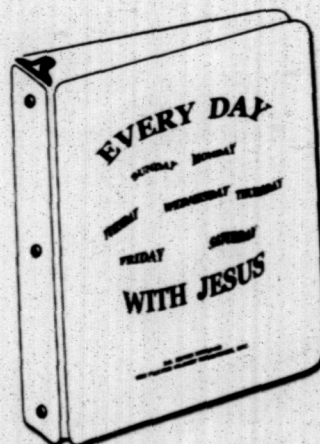
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FAMILY BIBLE STUDY

God wants me to be joyful

Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 9-17

By Ruth V. Gamble

I enjoy people-watching. I have decided that if people's faces reflect their real self, there is not much joy for many folks! Does God really want us to be joyful? The answer lies in distinguishing between "happiness" and "joy."

The word "happy" gives us the clue. The dictionary defines "happy" as "favored by luck or circumstance." The secular worldview tries feverishly to gain happiness by acquiring things, achieving pleasure, or success. Joy, however, comes from the Lord as a deep sense of security, assuring us that his love and grace bring the best for those in his will. It is no exuberant emotional rush, but an

awareness that God is in control and "it is well with my soul."

It is strange, but true, that we can experience joy in the absence of happiness. Hebrews 12:2 says that for the joy that was set before him Jesus endured the cross!

His joy was doing the Father's will. Certainly not anticipation of the cross!

As a Christian wife I could experience joy when my husband of 48 years died because I knew he was free from suffering and had gone to be with his Lord, and that we would be reunited one day, but I was not happy!

In Galatians 5:2 JOY is the second fruit listed. Knowing that "fruit" is the expected evidence of maturity makes us



Gamble

realize that joy should be a natural outcropping, evident in every Christian's life. We experience joy as we determine/choose to give God his rightful place in our lives.

The words "joy" or "rejoice" appear hundreds of times in Scripture, and many events illustrate joy. The return of the Jewish exiles after their captivity is one example.

Moses and the prophets had warned God's people of the dire consequences of disobedience to God. In Jeremiah and Lamentations we see the results of Israel's disobedience. Their beloved city of Jerusalem, the Temple, and city walls were destroyed by the Babylonians. God fulfills his promises — both for blessings and for punishment!

God is merciful and forgiving. Repentance brings forgiveness and restoration. God used the godly priest, Ezra, to lead the people in rebuilding the

Temple. Later the layman, Nehemiah, accomplished the rebuilding of the city's walls in only fifty-two days!

Nehemiah realized that there were also broken lives and relationships that needed rebuilding. He gathered the people to hear the reading of God's Law. The "seventh month" was significant in the Jewish calendar, including the Feast of Trumpets, The Day of Atonement, and the Feast of Tabernacles (Booths). God had ordered that the Law be read to the people every seven years during the Feast of Tabernacles (Deut. 31:10-11).

The "Law" was the Books of Moses, the Pentateuch. So, on the first day of the seventh month Ezra read the Law aloud from daybreak until noon as the people stood to show reverence for God and his Word. The assembly included men and women, "all who were able to understand," and we are told that they listened attentively. Ezra praised the Lord, the Great God, and the people

bowed down with their faces to the ground.

The response to hearing God's Word was one of mourning, weeping, repentance, and confession (Nehemiah 8:9). Nehemiah, or possibly Ezra, told them to "Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared...do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength." The Levites also spoke, saying, "Be still, for this is a sacred day. Do not grieve" (8:11). The people responded by celebrating and sharing the joy of a fellowship meal.

The story of Nehemiah is one of contrasts: ruin but also rebuilding and restoration; disobedience but also mercy and forgiveness; grief and mourning but also celebration and rejoicing. Living in obedience and fellowship with God is our source of deep and abiding joy which God wants us to experience and demonstrate.

Gamble is a member of Slayden Church, Holly Springs.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Acting with integrity

2 Samuel 2:8-4:12

By Bart Walker

Integrity, or the lack of thereof, often becomes obvious at the most critical times. Times of pressure, stress, change, temptation, struggle, and emotional upheaval can manifest the presence or absence of integrity.

This was once made obvious to me as I toured our church property after wind had swept through our city. A tall, apparently healthy oak tree was thrust down during what didn't appear to be too serious a storm.

As I examined this tree, I discovered that, while its outer layers and bark had remained intact through the decades, an insidious rot had been growing unnoticed. The stress of the storm had caused the hidden to become obvious.

So it was also with the characters in our Bible lesson for this week. The storms of civil war and the strong winds of vengeful attitudes and jealous

hearts brought to light the integrity in one heart and the hidden rot in others.

While David had every "human" right to rejoice in the deaths of the general of the army who opposed his reign and the king under which this general served, he was unwilling to welcome their deaths with joy. Instead, he mourned and brought honor to the fallen.

Our lesson this week begins in 2 Samuel 3:1 with God honoring David's past integrity as well as Samuel's prophecies concerning David. David was on the rise as God's chosen while Ishbosheth (representing Saul's house as Saul's son) grew weaker.

The lengthy hostilities began to reveal the obvious — David's house was destined to reign as God's appointed house over all of Judah and Israel. Abner, the kingmaker of Israel, realized the apparent



Walker

While Bible students argue over whether Abner and Ishbosheth truly fell out over the concubine issue (concubines were the property of the king's dynasty and anyone taking them could be construed as presuming upon the throne — see 2 Sam. 16:21-23) or whether

Abner simply saw the writing on the wall and used the concubine incident as a breakpoint with Ishbosheth, Abner took the opportunity of the breach in their relationship to promise to promote David as true king over the united Israel.

The prophecy concerning David spoken through Samuel (1 Sam. 15:28-29; 16:12) must have been known to Abner as we see him repeating a loosely-worded version of this prophecy to the elders of Israel and Benjamin in 3:17-19. We see these events leading up to David's reign over a unified Israel as "the fruit of integrity" in the life of David.

Abner's offer of solidification of David's reign after the years of tense relations accompanied by war caused David's general, Joab, to become inflamed with jealousy and renewed commit-

ment for revenge. Remember that it was Abner who killed Asahel (Joab's fleet-footed brother) during one of the first battles between the house of David and the house of Saul.

Joab demonstrated his lack of integrity when he realized that David had met with Abner and had come to terms of peace. Joab lured Abner into a meeting, and Abner, assuming Joab was acting under David's direction, lowered his guard and was murdered by Joab.

David demonstrated his proof of integrity in his reaction to the murder of Abner. David was so offended that he pronounced a curse on the house of Joab (3:29), called for national mourning and admitted that the death of Abner weakened (3:39) his reign (Abner's murder by David's general would lay suspect David's true intentions toward Abner and the house of Saul).

David's steadfast integrity was manifested in his reaction to the murder of Ishbosheth. David had always demonstrated a high degree of loyalty to authority (remember how often he could have slain Saul and was unwilling to raise his hand "against the Lord's anointed") and expected that in others.

When two commanders (Baanah and Rechab, 4:2, 5-8) murdered Ishbosheth and brought his head and mistakenly called Saul David's enemy, David rewarded them in the same fashion as the one who claimed to have killed Saul — he had them killed and put on display as examples of what traitors and murderers would receive under David's reign.

In each of these instances, David displayed an inner integrity that set him apart from those driven by revenge, self-service, fame, and jealousy. David manifests for each of us the inner quality of faith that trusts that God can bring about his promises without the need for man to run ahead of God's plan.

In each of these instances we see the danger of hidden lack of integrity that grows as rot on the inside of a tree and will become apparent when the stress of life in the fallen world reveals the inner working of each human heart.

When the wind blows, what will be revealed about each of us. Will we, like David, demonstrate true integrity, or like the others in our lesson, fall before the revealing winds of time!

Walker is pastor of Parkway Church, Natchez.

Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats,



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Please make articles concise. Include the **who, what, when, where** details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts are not reproducible. Digital photos may be used if submitted as a JPEG file via either (a) e-mail, (b) three-and-a-half inch floppy disk, or (c) CD. Photos must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted.

All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. Requests to return photographs must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

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Gifts of Honor and Memory

A portion of **The Village View** is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful, and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

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D X T G G S W L E F Y L L ; P F U
D X L W F L P K Y F G M E W U
T K G D M E Y Y .

H L P S D L W Q M X - F W F Y :

T W O Y

Clue: M = T

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Luke Five: Thirty-One.

Rockettown's 'Spock' ponders next move

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — As a general rule, most contemporary Christian artists aren't likely to reference the father of calculus and modern mathematics during their concerts — unless you're Shaun Groves.

His colleagues at Rockettown Records in Nashville have labeled the deep-thinking musician as the "Spock of Christian music," comparing Groves to Star Trek's resident thinker. It's a label Groves doesn't seem to mind.

"It's good to think about life and who you are and what you do," Groves said. "It's helped me to examine my life and see where my weaknesses are and where potential pitfalls are. It's part of who I am."

It's a part of his music, too. Groves' thoughtful, Scripture-based lyrics have been widely accepted by listeners of Christian music. His debut project, *Invitation to Eavesdrop*, was heralded as a success, garnering the young Christian artist Dove Award nominations for new artist of the year, pop/contemporary recorded song, and song of the year.

In the fall he toured with Bebo Norman and most recently completed "The Eleventh Hour" tour with Jars of Clay.

It's a far cry from more than one year ago when the college-educated musician was earning a paycheck by cleaning a Nashville-area church. Still, the Southern Baptist musician hasn't forgotten his roots and he's not

about to let fame and popularity seep into his life.

"I think I've chilled out a little bit over this past year," said Groves, a native of Tyler, Texas, and now a member of the First Church, Franklin, Tenn. "That's probably going to show up in some way in my next record."

Groves said his second release will include some songs that are a little more celebratory.

"The songs on the first record came from the time of college to when I moved to Nashville," he said. "I wasn't liking the job I had. I wasn't sure where I needed to be and I was wrestling with some deep ideas. I was knee-deep in some pretty deep things."

From ballads to rock anthems, *Invitation to Eavesdrop* is a musical testimony of Groves' transitional years that consequently invites listeners to hear a conversation between the artist and God.

"Musical style is easy to describe, but I wrestled with how to explain my lyrical style," Groves said. "Until I realized that every song is a conversation, usually with God, about personal feelings or circumstances."



Groves

Since I never write with anyone besides myself and the person I'm talking to, everyone else who hears the song is really eavesdropping on a moment of my life — a private conversation made public.

"I believe that the Christian life is a conversation with God and man," he said. "We should live as if the world is listening to what our every action says

about the validity of our faith." With one successful project behind him, Groves said he is looking forward to the future.

"I'm at a point where I am looking back and seeing how good God has been," Groves said. "The hard work and discipline have paid off in a positive sense. I wouldn't be surprised if the next album is a lot happier."

With one year of touring under his belt, most people, Groves said, seem to understand his message.

"I feel a certain amount of unrest," he said. "I've been fortunate to be at churches that get it, that understand how to do ministry, understand discipleship, evangelism, and worship. These are things that are needed to have a well-rounded biblically sound church."

"I've heard some messed-up things out there," he added. "I've seen people angry at Jars

of Clay for playing in a club. I've seen them belittle them and tear them down as if the guys have no feelings."

Some people, Groves said, are "completely close-minded to anything different, anything challenging. We live in a Jabez culture. We have this Christian ghetto mentality of 'God just bless me. I will buy it. I will consume it if it will benefit me.' I've met a lot of Christians like that."

From his college years at Baylor University in Waco, Texas, to his global stage, Groves said that he understands the calling on his life.

"I have been given a platform and I plan to use it to tell others about Christ," he said. "I really do believe that we exist to increasingly know God and continually make him known. You would be amazed at how revolutionary that message is to people. I tell that every time I can."

"When I get to the end of my life, judgment time, when every act of my life is laid out as a brick in the wall and God lights that wall with the fire of his judgment, all the awards and accolades are going to burn up but the time I spend with young people, the time I spend on stage challenging Christians to be intentional, to worship God not just with a song but with your life, those things are going to last. They will be the jewels that I will be able to lay at his feet."

Ala. church targeting teens with student center

HOOVER, Ala. (BP) — Built on a solid foundation of prayers and God's Word, Hunter Street Church's newest extension, the 24:7 Student Center, opened last month. According to Michael Smith, student pastor at the Hoover, Ala. church, about 1,500 peo-

ple attended the grand opening. "I thought the night was incredible," said Smith. "It was everything we'd hoped it would be and thought it would be."

"I thought it was great," said Pastor Buddy Gray, "and on Sunday morning, we had about 500 youth who came (to worship)."

The center, built in six months, consists of three buildings: a worship building, a Sunday School building, and the main building, which houses a cafe that will serve food and beverages, computers with Internet access, a 25-foot rock climbing wall, a game station with X-Boxes and PlayStation 2 units, two basketball cages, and conference rooms.

Outside are a full basketball court, a sand volleyball pit, and an amphitheater.

Smith said the computer programs and games are rated E for Everyone, and the computers have safeguards for the students. "They're totally filtered and totally firewalled," he said.

"We wanted to create a safe environment for kids who are members to bring their friends," Smith said. "This is creating a great opportunity for us to reach students who wouldn't step in church."

"I knew it was good to bring somebody to church," senior Stephen Foshee said, "but it's easier to bring somebody to church with all this."

Judy McCoy, a member who has two children in Hunter Street's youth group, said the center has done a good job of creating a safe setting for the students to meet and hang out.

"I'll feel very confident they're in a safe and protected environment," she noted.

Amid all the fun and games, Smith wants to keep the focus on the ministry and purpose of the student group.

"We want to make sure the students and the entire church understand that it's about the spiritual ministry, not about the building," Smith said.

To that end, church members took turns reading the entire Bible throughout the building, and prayed from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. during the week before the center's opening. Smith also made sure the building's foundation was solid.

"The students wrote prayers and thoughts on the concrete before laying the carpet," Smith said.

"It set our mentality," said junior Brad Hardekopf. "(The building) is not for us. It's gonna glorify God."

"It's a challenge," said senior John-Paul Basham. "To whom much is given, much is expected."

Gray said the involvement of the church members in the Bible reading and prayer reaffirms the church's attitude toward its students and the new center. "That's the reason the adults wanted to do this," Gray said, "... to reach other kids and grow our own kids. It's a place for our own kids to mature, a place for our kids to bring friends."

The students feel that positive attitude. "This is encouragement for us," said Foshee. "I'm glad to have a church that supports us."

"I think it's amazing that Michael and Buddy and our church allow us to have a vision like this," said student Samantha Ralston. "It's shown me what God can do."



FOCUSING ON SCRIPTURE — Hunter Street Church member Lance Rhodes reads Num. 14-36 in the conference room of the new 24:7 Center for students at the Hoover, Ala. church, in preparation for the Center's grand opening that night. (Photo by Erin Webster)